

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office
FLOOR DEBATE

April 22, 2003 LB 759

body that was involved. Maybe it was not just Lincoln and not just Omaha, but it was an arrangement that involved advantage to all sectors of society. So, fine to look at things, but let's not get to the point where we're ignoring our own processes and not looking at things in proportion or in relationship to all other things, which I'm afraid is what we're beginning to do at this point. Thank you.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Beutler. Senator Thompson.

SENATOR THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker...or, Mr. President, members of the body. I'm trying to keep an open mind on this. I did introduce two bills that dealt with cigarette tax earmarks. And Senator Beutler is right. We haven't had bills on all of these. But I think we're going to be talking about a lot of things in the budget that may or may not have been discussed extensively in the hearing process this year. So I don't know whether I can hold true to that, although I certainly understand. And I would guess that if all the people who secured these earmarks over the years, once the word gets out that we're debating them, we'll have a pretty full Rotunda, and you'll be getting a lot of those e-mails and letters from all the constituencies that have been successful in getting cigarette tax earmarks over the years. One of the earmarks that I chose to redirect was the earmark for Game and Parks. And Senator Beutler is correct in saying that we have processes in place and so forth. But we have things that change pretty rapidly around here. The bill was advanced during the special session. We debated it. It got about 21 votes. I introduced the same bill again this year, and it was, I believe, "IPed" by the Revenue Committee. And that bill would have said what Game and Parks has now is an earmark for their construction projects. And my contention was that we shouldn't give one agency of state government an earmark. It should be part of the overall Building Maintenance Fund, and should be allocated as part of that process, since Game and Parks also can come to the Building Maintenance Fund for projects, and does. And it seemed to me, rather than giving one agency an earmark of cigarette tax money for the purposes of that agency, we have a lot of things in state government, whether it's the veterans' homes, whether it's